Imaging the following scene: as the bell to start class rings, the teacher walks to front of the classroom and explains the day’s lesson: history of the English Language. As the teacher walks over to flip the lights off, the students are already preparing their surroundings for the lesson; books drop loudly on the floor, notebooks page open, and pencils are out. By the time the teacher begins with slide one, “origins of English” eyelids are sinking low. By slide five, the only thing students are learning is how to sleep in a sitting position with a slight background hum. Once all fifty slides are complete the teacher flips the light back on just in time for the bell to ring. Another successful PowerPoint presentation delivered!

This scene is all too common in the educational field, and what is even more worrisome is that the PowerPoint presentation, all things considered, is not very old. So why do students seemingly power down their brains just as the lights in the classroom dim? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, author of *Cognitive Surplus*, argues that a surplus of passive consumption of media has caused a backlash. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ states, “Life in the developed world includes a lot of passive participation: at work we are office drones, at home we are couch potatoes” (17). All of this passive consumption has caused a revolution of free time. People today are beginning to find traditional, passive media consumption like television (and PowerPoint) less engaging than ever before. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cites research that finds, “young populations with access to fast, interactive media are shifting their behavior away from media that presupposes pure consumption” (17). When students walk into a classroom in the 21st century, they see PowerPoint as a media made purely for linear consumption and automatically go into sleep mode.

As engagement in passive media wanes in schools, educators must find new ways of presenting factual information to students in an engaging manner. The linear, top down organization model of PowerPoint is outdated and ineffective. A more interactive, holistic and circular mode of communication in needed to re-engage students. Prezi, a new form of presentation software may be one small step toward student engagement.

Definition of a new concept/tool related to Web 2.0:

Prezi is a new and innovative way to present information to large audiences. Instead of following the traditional, linear way of presenting information, Prezi focuses audience on size and perspective. Unlike the usual slide show, which advances through a linear progression of images and text, Prezi presents the audience with a canvas filled with information of different sizes and not in a traditional linear order. Instead of simply clicking from slide to slide, viewers zoom in, out, and around the large canvas, exploring different aspects of the topic. Although seemingly confusing at first, Prezi correlates information with size on the canvas and not through placement in a certain order. As viewers experience the presentation, larger concepts appear large on the canvas while smaller details appear distant and are zoomed into. Viewers associate important ideas with the large canvas as a whole and more specific details as part of the larger canvas, giving the viewers a sense of completeness as the presentation concludes.

History of a new concept/tool:

The first Prezi ever created was made by Adam Somlai-Fisher in 2001. Somlai-Fisher, as an artist and designer, spent the early 2000’s trying to facilitate new and creative ways to showcase artistic projects with a large audience. In the early days of Prezi information needed to be coded individually forcing Somlai-Fisher to spend most of his time working in code. It was not until 2007, when Somlai-Fisher met Peter Halacsy, that Prezi in its current form was born. Halacsy convinced Somlai-Fisher to create an editing tool for Prezi and make this tool available on the internet for free. Once the full potential for Prezi was realized, Somlai-Fisher and Halacsy asked Peter Arvai, formerly of omvard.se, a website that tracks quality of healthcare in Sweden and winner of best Swedish website of 2009, to act as CEO of Prezi. Arvia agreed and soon Prezi was launched in 2009 based out of Budapest. After an award and a grant from the TED Conferences, Prezi opened its second office in San Francisco. Prezi has been growing in popularity since 2010. (from Prezi.com, <http://prezi.com/about/#arvai>)

Advantages or disadvantages with a new concept/tool:

One of the major advantages of Prezi is that it is an open source software program, meaning that it is free to users on the internet. Anyone can see and view a Prezi, as long as they have a link to the web address. A free log in account is all that is needed for those wanting to create a Prezi. Being a free program opens wide the doors of usage for any educator or student, especially in these times of ever constricting monetary resources. Additionally, open software, “has been the most visible evidence of a shift to collective intelligence” (Jacobs 2010, Curriculum 21 P.84). Collective intelligence models like wikis, blogs, and chat rooms are extremely popular to the average student. This familiar open software model that Prezi utilizes makes it a more accessible and engaging tool than PowerPoint in the eyes of students.

A second advantage of Prezi is the zooming views. Unlike PowerPoint, which follows a very traditional and linear pattern, Prezi uses different views to zoom in and out of the entire canvas. Viewers are engaged by the ever shifting perspectives throughout the entire presentation. This non-linear pattern of organizing information better fits the informational pattern of students today. Gwen Solomon, author of *Web 2.0 How-to For Educators*, believes that students interact “with the world in a non-linear fashion…following an idea in ways that has meaning to them, and jump from one thing to the next” (Gwen 2010 P.1). Prezi is able to mimic this idea of “jumping” from one idea to the next through the way it organizes information for students to see.

Another advantage of Prezi is its ease of use. Prezi for educational uses is free and only takes a few clicks to receive and educator log in. Navigation in the editing screen is simple and many examples and how-to tutorials are available. It is easy to import an existing PowerPoint presentation into Prezi to make it more engaging. Educators will find Prezi too convenient a tool to ignore.

One of the only disadvantages to using Prezi is the limit on the size of files. Prezi currently recommends an image size of 2880 by 2880 pixels or less. This limit may pose problems for educators working in the picture editing or graphic design content areas. (from Prezi.com)

Possible issues or concerns with a new concept/tool in K12 education

One concern for using Prezi is safety concerns regarding open information on the internet. Educators can choose who may view their Prezi and can even password protect individual projects. As always educators must use caution and safe practices when students are posting information in the internet.

Future direction of a new concept/tool

In the future, Prezi may become even more interactive. Students may be able to create Prezis and link information together. Hopefully, Prezi will allow more than one person to edit a project at one given time adding to the collaborative aspect of presentations.

Conclusion:

Prezi is a new and more engaging format for educators to present information to a class. Students will feen more engaged, as it follows an organizational concept more familiar to their learning styles. Educators should take advantage of this free and easy to use web 2.0 tool making their classrooms more engaging for students.